

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOR IO AND EB ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UN, OCON
SUBJECT: INFORMAL CONSULTATION WITH GROUP 77 ON WORLD FOOD
COUNCIL BUREAU

1. AMBASSADOR J.E. JOHN RODRIGO, SRI LANKA PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO FAO AND CHAIRMAN OF GROUP 77 IN ROME, INVITED A FEW FRIENDS TO AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION IN HIS HOME THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 16 ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE BUREAU FOR THE APPROACHING MEETINGS OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL (PREPARATORY MEETING, MAY 9-13, AND MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING IN MANILA, JUNE 20-25), A SUBJECT ON WHICH GROUP 77 REPRESENTATIVES HAVE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE WFC CONSULTATIONS THE LAST TWO MONTHS, AND WHICH IS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE WITH RESPECT TO THE SUCCESS OF THOSE MEETINGS. PRESENT WERE THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA GROUP, ALEXANDER LANDYMORE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND CHRISTOPHER NORRED OF THE UNITED STATES, AMBASSADOR ABDELMUHSIN M. AL-SUDEARY OF SAUDI ARABIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND AKE ANDERSON, SWEDISH ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE TO FAO (INVITED INSTEAD OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ALTERNATE GRANQVIST BECAUSE ANDERSON LIVES ACROSS THE STREET FROM RODRIGO). PAUL ALPEN OF AUSTRALIA WAS ALSO INVITED BUT HAS A SEVERE CASE OF THE

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GRIPPE. THE LENGTHY CANDID DISCUSSION WAS CONDUCTED ON THE BASIS THAT THE INDIVIDUALS WERE NOT SPEAKING FOR ANY GROUP, OR EVEN FOR THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS, BUT MERELY EXCHANGING THEIR PERSONAL VIEWS ABOUT EXPECTATIONS OF DESIRES AND PREFERENCES OF THEIR AND OTHER MEMBER GOVERNMENTS.

2. RODRIGO SAID THAT MANY OF THE GROUP-77 COUNTRIES WERE COOL TO

THE IDEA OF RE-ELECTING MAREI OF EGYPT AS PRESIDENT OF THE WFC. MAREI HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO GIVE MUCH TIME TO WFC WORK OR EVEN ATTEND SOME SESSIONS, AND HAD OFFENDED SOME OF THE COUNTRIES. NORRED AND LANDYMORE AGREED, POINTING OUT HOWEVER THAT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES COULD NOT EASILY TAKE A POSITION OPPOSING MAREI'S RE-ELECTION. THEY COMMENTED THAT MAREI HAD LEFT THE 1976 MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE WFC BEFORE IT WAS CONCLUDED, REPORTEDLY WITHOUT ANY COMPELLING REASON FOR DOING SO, AND HAD LEFT THE CLOSING HOURS IN THE HANDS OF AN INEPT SOVIET VICE-PRESIDENT. MOREOVER, MAREI'S PERSONAL STYLE IS IN THE OLD "PASHA" TRADITION. AL-SUDEARY AGREED BUT SAID HIS COUNTRY COULD NOT OPENLY OPPOSE EGYPT. HE SUGGESTED, AND ALL AGREED, THAT IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR RODRIGO TO TALK WITH JEAN CAMARA OF GUINEA, HEAD OF THE GROUP-77 AFRICAN REGIONAL GROUP, AND WITH OTHERS OF DIFFERENT AFRICAN SECTORS, SINCE MAREI STANDS AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THAT REGION. IT WAS THE EXPECTATION THAT THE AFRICAN GROUP WOULD OPPOSE MAREI. OPPOSITION TO HIM SHOULD NOT BE STATED PUBLICLY ON HIS PAST POOR PERFORMANCE BUT ON THE NEED FOR ROTATION OF LEADERSHIP IN AN ORGANIZATION LIKE THE WFC WHICH IS DESIGNED TO APPROACH SUCCESSIVELY THE KEY PROBLEMS IN THE FOOD FIELD. ANDERSON STATED THIS PRINCIPLE OF ROTATION AS A BASIC CONCEPT ON BEHALF OF THE SCANDINAVIAN GROUP.

3. IF MAREI COULD BE SET ASIDE, RODRIGO SUGGESTED THAT ARTURO TANCO OF THE PHILIPPINES (A CANDIDATE FOR THE WFC PRESIDENCY. THE OTHERS AGREED, NOTING THAT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POST NOW HELD BY DR. HANNAH OF THE UNITED STATES AND FOR WHICH TANCO HAS SOUGHT NOMINATION BY SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM NOW REPORTEDLY WILL NOT BE VACANT FOR SOME TIME. NORRED ADDED THAT HE HAD HEARD FROM SEVERAL DEVELOPED COUNTRIES THAT THEY WERE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED

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BY TANCO, BUT HAD DOUBTS ABOUT HIS ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECRETARIAT ABILITIES WHICH HAVE BEEN A SERIOUS LACK IN THE WFC SECRETARIAT. HE MIGHT BE A GOOD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IF BACKED UP BY A CAPABLE ADMINISTRATOR WITH UN SECRETARIAT EXPERIENCE, BUT HE WOULD IN ANY EVENT PROBABLY BE AN EXCELLENT PRESIDENT. ALL AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE MOVE TO OFFER THE POST TO HIM, IN VIEW OF PHILIPPINE HOSTING OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING. IT WOULD NOT BE MERELY THE COURTEOUS OFFERING OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP TO THE HOST COUNTRY: TANCO WOULD BEGIN HIS PRESIDENCY WITH THE PREPARATORY MEETING AND CONTINUE FOR TWO YEARS IN A POSITION OF CONSIDERABLE PRESTIGE, WHICH MIGHT PLEASE HIM AND THE PHILIPPINES AS WELL AS WOULD HAVE THE POST OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SALARY ATTACHED TO THE POSITION OF WFC PRESIDENT). RODRIGO SAID THAT IF THE AFRICANS AGREED TO SET MAREI ASIDE, HE WOULD APPROACH AMBASSADOR VALDES OF THE PHILIPPINES TO SOUND OUT THE REACTION OF TANCO AND THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT.

4. RODRIGO SAID THAT THE VICE PRESIDENCIES SHOULD GO TO NEW MEN, ON A ROTATION PRINCIPLE, FROM THE SOCIALIST BLOC, LATIN AMERICA,

AND AFRICA. ALL AGREED THAT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PRESENT VICE PRESIDENTS HAD NOT BEEN COMMENDATORY, AND THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF SOME CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP IN CONFERENCE FAVORED BY THE WFC SECRETARIAT PROBABLY SHOULD BE SET ASIDE FOR THAT REASON.

5. NORRED SAID THAT SOME OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ATTACHED PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE RAPPOREUR POST, AND PROBABLY WOULD FAVOR CONTINUING LANDYMORE IN THAT POST, SINCE THERE HAD BEEN SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES LAST YEAR IN DEFINING THE FORM OF DECISIONS BY THE WFC, AND THE DIFFICULTIES HAD BEEN RESOLVED LARGELY BY LANDYMORE'S WORK IN LIAISON WITH SOME OF THE GROUP-77 REPRESENTATIVES (SPECIFICALLY YUGOSLAVIA AND GUINEA). LANDYMORE SAID HE HAD BEEN QUERIED BY THE WFC SECRETARIAT, AND THAT THE UK GOVERNMENT HAD INDICATED IT WOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE HIM AVAILABLE FOR THE 1977 MEETINGS (HE HAD PREVIOUSLY INDICATED THIS TO THE GENEVA GROUP REPRESENTATIVES ON FEBRUARY 15). RODRIGO ASKED LANDYMORE WHETHER HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE IN 1978, SINCE HE IS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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RETIRE IN JUNE 1977. LANDYMORE SAID THAT HE PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE. IT WAS AGREED THAT THIS WOULD MEAN THAT HE MIGHT NOT BE REPLACED BY ANOTHER UK REPRESENTATIVE, OR THAT THE TERM OF THE RAPPOREUR COULD BE DIFFERENTIATED FROM THOSE OF THE REST OF THE BUREAU.

6. LANDYMORE STATED WITH EMPHASIS THE VIEW THAT THE OFFICERS OF THE BUREAU SHOULD BEGIN WITH THE PREPARATORY MEETING AND CONTINUE INTO THE MINISTERIAL MEETING AND THE 1978 SESSIONS. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ANDERSON, ALL AGREED THAT THIS WAS IMPORTANT TO INSURE A CONTINUITY, PROGRESSION, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETINGS.

7. ALL AGREED THAT THE PROBLEM OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND SECRETARIAT WAS SEPARATE FROM THAT OF THE BUREAU.BEAUDRY

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